

The scheme of discharging the sewage at Orakei, formulated by Mr. Midgley Taylor in London, adopted by Mr. Bush, the City Engineer, and favourably reported upon by Mr. Hamer, the Engineer to the Harbour Board, was afterwards confirmed and adopted with slight modifications, suggested to the author of the scheme on his visit to Auckland. The able and eloquent address of Mr. Midgley Taylor to the representatives of the Drainage Conference, as well as the ease with which he disposed of all objections during the excursion on the harbour with the members of the Board, practically silenced all opposition to the principles of the scheme.

Speaking generally, a review of the past sanitary history of Auckland, more especially its record of preventable diseases due to direct infection coupled with unhygienic environment, with the severe toll paid for neglect to take advantage of modern developments of sanitary science, is an indictment against a long-suffering community. Owing to lack of co-ordination and multiplicity of control—the corollary of retaining seventeen local authorities attempting each in its own way to solve a problem which from its magnitude experience has taught all the world over can only be done efficiently by one controlling authority with a well-organized and highly trained staff, with authority untrammelled by considerations of parochial politics—Auckland has repeated the experience of other cities which have outgrown their early arbitrary boundaries.

The sins of omission in not introducing modern drainage are even overshadowed by sins of commission, as represented by the condition of districts where improperly so-called systems left to the slipshod methods of contractors of nightsoil and refuse removal have been a fruitful source of never-ending complaint. Even at the present time there are rubbish-tips in fairly populous districts where no attempt is made to cover putrifying organic refuse with a mantle of nature's all-purifying medium, the most efficient of all bacteriocidal agencies—mother earth. Out of the gloom, however, appears a ray of sunshine—let us hope an anchor of faith in a pilgrimage of uncertainty—the inception of a drainage scheme. Owing to the initiative of Auckland's leading citizen, with the goodwill and common-sense of the thinking part of the populace, and with the power of the Press acting as a *vis a tergo*, and so strengthening the hands of the Chairmen of the local authorities now in conference assembled, there is at last a reasonable prospect of a translation into action of the almost unanimous call for drainage.

HAWKE'S BAY DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Department of Public Health, District Office, Napier, 1st April, 1908.

I have the honour to lay before you the seventh annual report of the Hawke's Bay Health District.

I commenced my report for the year ending 31st March, 1907, with the following: "I am pleased to be able to report that there has been a steady advance in sanitary matters almost all along the line, and matters are shaping in several centres in such a manner that I am justified in the hope that next year I shall be able to report an equal if not more satisfactory advance." I am pleased to be able to record that my hopes have been justified with respect to many centres, which have advanced more during the past year than during the whole of the previous seven years of the existence of the Department. Even in those localities which have shown a lack of enthusiasm in the cause of preventive medicine, and only a moderate energy in carrying out my suggestions, there has been some progress.

It also gives me pleasure to again mention that friction worthy of the name between the local bodies and myself has been conspicuous by its absence during the past, as well as previous years. And in the majority of cases our relations have been most cordial.

Though the advance during each succeeding year seems to be small, or at all events less than I desire, yet when I look back on the conditions that prevailed when the Department came into existence the strides that have been made in the time have been enormous.

Up-country settlers and others living on the outskirts of towns continue to seek my advice with reference to the sanitation of their premises, and they fall in readily with the advice that I give them. The architects generally aid the cause of public health by specifying that the work is to be done in accordance with the requirements of the Napier Sanitary By-laws, and completed to the satisfaction of the Department. In all these cases Inspector Munro supervises the work and tests the drains before the work is passed.

Owing to the limited facilities for getting about in this district, this work is a great tax on the limited staff of this office, and at times Inspector Munro and myself are hard put to it to prevent the work from getting ahead of us.

The following infectious diseases have been notified during the past year:—

Enteric.—Napier, 5; Hastings, 5; Dannevirke, 1; Wairoa, 4; Gisborne, 19; Nuhaka, 4; remainder of district, 17: total, 55.